

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Forested State Trust Lands Habitat Conservation Plan Annual Update

Reporting Period

February 22,
2012-
December 31,
2012



Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
MONITORING AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT	1
Monitoring	1
Adaptive Management	2
HCP CHECKLIST	2
GRIZZLY BEAR	2
CANADA LYNX	4
AQUATICS	5
TRANSITION LANDS STRATEGY	10
Land Dispositions	10
Corrections	11
TRAINING	11
Implementation Training Prior to Issuance of the Permit	11
HCP Workgroup	12
Land Office Implementation Meetings	12
Projects in Progress	12
Implementation Training for this Reporting Period	12
Implementation Manual	12
HCP Internal Website	13
HCP Implementation Training	13
Aquatics Training	13
Project-level Training	13
CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES	13
ADJUSTING FOR NEW RESEARCH	13
SUMMARY	14
REFERENCES	14

INTRODUCTION

In the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Forested State Trust Lands Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) – a plan DNRC developed in order for the United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) to issue to DNRC the fifty (50) year Incidental Take Permit (Permit) - DNRC committed to providing the USFWS annual updates and 5-year monitoring reports. The updates and monitoring reports serve to help the two agencies assess the success of HCP implementation and the effectiveness of conservation commitments. This is the first annual update, and the reporting period for this update is February 22, 2012-December 31, 2012. According to the results reported in the following sections, DNRC has fulfilled its annual commitments for monitoring and reporting according to HCP Chapter 4 – Monitoring and Adaptive Management (DNRC 2010).

The DNRC and the USFWS will meet annually to discuss annual updates or 5 year monitoring reports, whichever is applicable. As outlined in Chapter 8- HCP Implementation, these meetings not only allow DNRC to present USFWS with the annual updates, they also serve as an information sharing opportunities and facilitate communication between the two agencies (DNRC 2010).

MONITORING AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

During development of the conservation strategies, DNRC and the USFWS included commitments to monitor certain aspects of the HCP conservation strategies. The monitoring and adaptive management program provides assurances that the HCP is being appropriately and effectively implemented, and outlines a course of action if the conservation strategies are not yielding the desired results.

Monitoring

There are two types of monitoring: (1) implementation monitoring and (2) effectiveness monitoring. Implementation monitoring ensures implementation of DNRC's conservation commitments throughout the Permit term. Implementation monitoring represents DNRC's largest monitoring commitment associated with the HCP and involves tracking, reporting and evaluating whether the covered activities are being performed in compliance with the HCP requirements. Implementation is primarily documented through project-level HCP checklists and validated through office and field reviews (DNRC 2010).

Effectiveness monitoring typically involves evaluation of a particular conservation commitment or suite of commitments designed to have a desired effect on a target species or resource. This type of monitoring is very intensive and requires extensive resources and expertise to conduct data collection and perform related analyses. In Chapter 4-Monitoring and Adaptive Management, DNRC and the USFWS recognize that this type of monitoring is beyond the scope and expertise of the DNRC and would be very expensive for the species being addressed in the HCP (DNRC 2010). Given those sideboards, as well as the fact that DNRC land ownership only comprises a small portion of the overall land area, effectiveness monitoring is fulfilled through a commitment by both the DNRC and the USFWS to review new relevant research at the annual meeting, and through DNRC's commitment to conduct limited monitoring to evaluate whether the management prescriptions and conservation commitments are having the desired effect on the given resource or species.

The monitoring tables in this update summarize both the implementation and effectiveness monitoring that took place during this reporting period. The tables contain information that must be reported annually as described in tables in the HCP Chapter 4 (DNRC 2010). The tables contain abbreviated

descriptions of the HCP commitments that DNRC is required to report on annually. For full descriptions of those commitments, please see Chapter 2 of the HCP.

Adaptive Management

Adaptive management is a process whereby conservation commitments and management actions may be changed based on the results obtained from effectiveness monitoring and/or research. This process results in a feedback loop that incorporates better understanding into everyday practices. This update serves as a component of the adaptive management process.

HCP CHECKLIST

In order to comply with HCP commitments, tools and protocols had to be developed. Many of the accomplishments listed in this update reflect the development and early implementation of these tools and protocols. As time progresses, refinements may occur as new and improved methods are discovered.

HCP checklists are the primary means by which the DNRC documents compliance with HCP commitments. These macro-enabled spreadsheets contain the HCP commitments specific to each field unit. The spreadsheets allow the field practitioner to verify whether or not the commitments are being implemented. The checklists provide the opportunity for many of the HCP commitments to be tracked in one place. At the end of the reporting period the checklists can be compiled into a database that provides information required in the annual updates and 5 year reports. Much of the information in the following tables was compiled using the checklists and the associated database.

There were 22 HCP checklists completed during this reporting period. Nineteen of those projects were timber harvests, the other 3 were Right-of-Way easements.

GRIZZLY BEAR

DNRC manages state trust lands located within grizzly bear habitat. The following table outlines the reporting requirements and results for grizzly bears.

Table 1 Grizzly bear reporting requirements and results

HCP COMMITMENT (Reporting Frequency)	REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS & RESULTS	HCP Page(s)
GB-PR1(1) Information Education (initially) – Providing working and living in bear habitat brochures for contractors and employees	Submit brochure to USFWS for approval	Approved by the USFWS 11/29/2012 -- Incorporated educational brochures into forest management contracts February 2013.	v.2. 4-10

Table 1 Grizzly bear reporting requirements and results

HCP COMMITMENT (Reporting Frequency)	REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS & RESULTS	HCP Page(s)
GB-PR1(2) Information Education (initially & 5 year) – Providing bear avoidance training for employees	Submit training content and methods to the USFWS	In progress. List of employees compiled. Training DVD approved by USFWS. Center for Wildlife Information contacted. Bear spray available to employees. Expected to have DVD and employee tracking in place July 2013. Expected to have all FM employees trained by March 2014.	v.2. 4-10
GB-PR2 (1) Firearms Restriction (initially) – Prohibiting employees and contractors from carrying firearms in bear habitat unless specifically authorized to carry a firearm	Initial review and approval of contract clauses.	Review and approval completed by USFWS February 2013. Incorporated firearm restriction clauses for contractors into forest management contracts.	v.2. 4-10
GB-PR3 Food Storage and Sanitation (initially) – Require proper storage of food, garbage, and other attractants	Initial review and approval of applicable contract clauses addressing food storage.	Review and approval completed by USFWS February 2013. Incorporated into forest management contracts.	v.2. 4-10
GB-PR6 Retention of Visual Screening in Riparian Management Zones (RMZs) and Wetland Management Zones (WMZs) (ongoing)	Provide number of projects where retention of visual screening in RMZs was applied, and number of projects where it was not applicable.	Number of projects where visual screening was retained in RMZs = 8. Number of projects where this measure was not applicable = 14.	v.2. 2-7
GB-RZ6 Granting of Easements (annual and 5 year) – Discourage	Use HCP Implementation Checklist to Identify Circumstances and Mitigation Associated With	One reciprocal access agreement was completed in grizzly bear recovery zones. No new open road was created as a result of this agreement.	v.2. 4-15

Table 1 Grizzly bear reporting requirements and results

HCP COMMITMENT (Reporting Frequency)	REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS & RESULTS	HCP Page(s)
granting of easements that relinquish DNRC control on roads within grizzly bear recovery zone	the Easement.	Mitigation: Signage was placed at private drive entrance indicating that the road is not open to the public.	
GB-SC4 Gravel Operations on Rested Parcels (annual) – Number of gravel pits allowed to be operated 0.25 mile from an open road on a rested parcel	Report Pits Operated >0.25 Miles From Open Roads in Resting Parcels and Mitigations Applied.	Number of projects where applied =0	v.2. 4-23
GB-CY4 Expedited Reduction of Open Road Densities (5-years) Completed	Compile and Report Information From Open Rd Reduction Checklist for all CYE parcels.	<p>Libby Unit Completed. All parcels reviewed and maps and descriptions of roads on each parcel were completed. No open roads are present on CYE parcels in Libby Unit</p> <p>Plains Unit Completed. All parcels reviewed and maps and descriptions of roads on each parcel were completed. No open roads are present on CYE parcels in Plains Unit that can be closed due to existing cost share agreements with the Lolo National Forest and reciprocal access agreements with several private timber companies. DNRC does not have the ability to control access in any of these situations. All other road segments in these parcels are restricted with closures that are now being checked on an annual basis.</p>	

CANADA LYNX

Some of the forested trust lands managed by DNRC occur within the distribution of Canada lynx, which was listed as threatened in 2000 by the USFWS. The lynx conservation strategy incorporates many of the existing Forest Management Administrative Rules of Montana (ARMs) and describes additional commitments based on recent information and studies. The following table outlines the reporting requirements and results for Canada lynx.

Table 2 Canada lynx reporting requirements and results

HCP COMMITMENT (Reporting Frequency)	REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS & RESULTS	HCP Page(s)
LY-HB1 Lynx Habitat Map (annual) – Track lynx habitat in the HCP project area	Provide lynx habitat map depicting annual changes and table that includes lynx habitat amounts by type for each administrative unit and LMA.	Due to inventory and GIS updates some changes were observed in lynx acres. See Attachment L-1	v.2. 4-29

AQUATICS

The aquatic conservation strategies were developed by DNRC with the technical assistance of the USFWS. The process was initiated by identifying a specific biological goal applicable to the three HCP fish species. The identified biological goal was to protect bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout and Columbia redband trout populations and their habitat and to contribute to habitat restoration or rehabilitation, as appropriate, which may have been affected by past DNRC forest management activities. Commitments were developed to address known scientific information and uncertainties in scientific knowledge, as well as existing data gaps (DNRC 2010). The following table outlines the reporting requirements and results for the Aquatics Conservation Strategy.

Table 3 Aquatics reporting requirements and results

HCP COMMITMENT (Reporting Frequency)	REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS & RESULTS	HCP Page(s)
AQ-RM (1) Riparian Management Zone Commitments (annual)	Complete HCP Implementation checklist review on all sites.	During 2012, RMZs were delineated on 9 projects containing class 1 streams or lakes. Only 4 of these projects include plans for a total of approximately 10 acres of RMZ harvests. To date RMZ harvests have only occurred on 0.8 acres of RMZ contained within a single DNRC timber sale. <i>See AQ-RM(2) below.</i>	V 2. 4-39
AQ-RM (2) Thresholds for RMZ harvest allowances (annual and 5 year)	Acres of Class 1 RMZ, Acres of Class 1 RMZ harvest under allowances, and RMZ area in non-stocked or seed/sapling size class, by aquatic analysis unit (AAU).	Harvest allowances were only utilized on 1 timber sale project (see Aquatic Attachment A-1 – RMZ Harvest Allowances 2012). Use of this allowance resulted in salvage harvest of 0.8 acres of RMZ in the Swan Aquatic Analysis Unit. The only AAUs currently above 20 % thresholds for non-stocked and/or seedling/sapling size class are the	V 2. 4-39

Table 3 Aquatics reporting requirements and results

HCP COMMITMENT (Reporting Frequency)	REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS & RESULTS	HCP Page(s)
		Bitterroot (33%) and North Fork Flathead (22%) AAUs. These areas are above threshold levels due to the effects of the 2000 and 2001 wildfire events. Allowances have not been utilized in these AAUs.	
AQ-SD Implement sediment delivery reduction commitments (annual)	Amount of new road constructed, reconstructed, relocated, abandoned and reclaimed. Include maps (may be contract maps first few years until GIS is available).	Road activities included in timber sale contracts sold from Permit issuance – April 2013 include: 18.7 miles of permanent road construction 8.2 miles of temporary road construction 5.2 miles of road reclamation 0 miles of road abandonment 11.8 miles of road reconstruction 79.5 miles Best Management Practices (BMP) Upgrades 74.4 miles BMP maintenance (A list of individual road activities included in DNRC timber sales contracts sold during 2012, and individual timber sale contract maps are available upon request).	V2. 4-40
AQ-FC 1/6 of sites in need of corrective actions implemented, planned or designed every 5 years. All priority 1 sites completed within 15 years. All sites completed with 30 years. (annual and 5 year)	Maintain planning schedule and report accomplishments.	DNRC completed a preliminary inventory of stream crossing sites in 2006 and the results were reported in HCP/EIS. The original HCP baseline included 106 inventoried stream crossing sites in need of corrective actions. To date (based on GIS and fish presence/absence survey updates) 30 new sites have been added and 35 sites removed from the planning schedule (See Aquatic Attachment A-2 – HCP Fish Connectivity Implementation Monitoring). In addition, corrective actions have been implemented at 12 sites (see Aquatic Attachment A-3 – Sites Where Fish Connectivity Corrective Actions Have been Implemented 2006-	V2. 4-41

Table 3 Aquatics reporting requirements and results

HCP COMMITMENT (Reporting Frequency)	REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS & RESULTS	HCP Page(s)
		2012). There are 89 sites remaining in need of corrective actions. The HCP 5-year target requires DNRC to address 1/6 of the sites in need of corrective actions (17 total sites) by 2017. Seventy percent of the 5 year goal has been achieved following year 1 of HCP implementation, and only a single Priority 1 site remains in need of corrective actions.	
AQ-GZ – Implement grazing conservation strategies for grazing licenses on classified forest lands (annual)	Update status of grazing evaluations and verifications completed, and corrective action implemented.	During 2012, grazing evaluations were completed on 59 different grazing license located on 99 different trust land parcels. 75 of these parcels are included in the HCP project, and 30 of these parcels include a stream supporting an HCP covered fish species. These initial evaluations indicated that 12 of the parcels supporting HCP covered fish species may have adverse impacts to riparian vegetation and fish habitat and require follow-up verifications. Eight of these verifications have already been completed and 4 of these sites have been confirmed as being in need of corrective actions. To date corrective actions have been implemented on 3 of these 4 sites (See Aquatic Attachment A-4 – 2012 HCP Grazing License Verification and Corrective Action Status for more detailed information).	V2. 4-41
AQ-Cumulative Watershed Effects (CWE) Has DNRC implemented the CWE commitments? (annual and 5 year)	Report number, type and location of CWE analysis completed. Provide documentation of mitigation measures or alternatives developed for projects with moderate or high CWE risks.	CWE analyses were completed for 14 timber sales and timber permits during 2012 (the other 5 timber sales were so small they did not meet criteria required to complete a CWE analysis). For 9 of these projects a Level 1 CWE analysis (coarse filter) was determined to be sufficient level of analysis due to determination of low risks. More detailed analysis were completed on the	V2. 4-41

Table 3 Aquatics reporting requirements and results

HCP COMMITMENT (Reporting Frequency)	REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS & RESULTS	HCP Page(s)
		other 5 projects where the CWE Coarse filter analysis determined that there was potential for moderate to high levels of risk (see Aquatic Attachment A-5 for a list of projects with completed CWE analysis and a summary of the results).	
Assess the potential Large Woody Debris (LWD) recruitment and determine whether in-stream LWD targets will be met on five or more riparian harvest sites. (annual and 5 year)	Annual update will consist of a summary of the status of all monitoring activities.	DNRC has initiated pre-harvest LWD, shade and stream temperature monitoring on 3 sites where RMZ harvest will be implemented under the HCP. DNRC has completed both pre-harvest and post-harvest LWD, shade and stream temperature monitoring at 4 sites harvest under SMZ law. In addition, monitoring has been completed for 2 sites harvest with SMZ/HCP hybrid prescriptions. A brief description of each individual RMZ/SMZ Harvest monitoring project is available upon request.	V2. 4-42
Evaluate levels of in-stream cover retained after riparian harvest. (annual and 5 year)	Annual update will consist of a summary of the status of all monitoring activities.	See information above.	V2. 4-42
Monitor stream temperatures to evaluate if levels of in-stream cover are adequate to maintain stream temperatures. (annual and 5 year)	Annual update will consist of a summary of the status of all monitoring activities.	See information above.	V2. 4-42
BMP Audits on all applicable projects (annual and 5 year)	Annual update will consist of a summary of the status of all monitoring activities.	Status update: Statewide BMP audits conducted on 6 DNRC sites in 2012 (see Aquatic Attachment A-6 – Executive Summary: Montana Forestry Best Management Practices 2012 Monitoring Report). Results of statewide audits found DNRC sites had a 99% rate of proper BMP AQ-application. All of these sites are within the HCP project area,	V2. 4-43

Table 3 Aquatics reporting requirements and results

HCP COMMITMENT (Reporting Frequency)	REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS & RESULTS	HCP Page(s)
		<p>but they were harvested prior to ITP issuance.</p> <p>Internal BMP audits were conducted by DNRC on 10 timber sale projects during 2012. Nine of the 10 sites occurred within the HCP project area. In addition, all 10 sites audited were harvested prior to ITP issuance. The results of the internal audits conducted within the HCP project area found that BMP properly applied on 98% of the practices rated (see Aquatic Attachment A-7 – DNRC Internal BMP Audits 2012)..</p>	
Timber sale inspections on all applicable projects. (annual and 5 year)	Annual update will consist of a summary of the status of all monitoring activities.	During 2012, 445 timber sale inspections were completed on 54 ongoing timber sale projects within HCP project area. Examples of inspection reports are available upon request.	V2. 4-43
Ongoing quantitative studies at two sites. (annual and 5 year)	Annual update will consist of a summary of the status of all monitoring activities.	During 2012, DNRC completed soil effects monitoring on 1 site within the HCP project area. The monitoring is designed to quantify the amount of detrimental soil impacts (erosion, displacement and compaction) occurring within harvest units. The harvest activities monitored were conducted prior to Permit issuance, but the harvest is considered representative of DNRC project area harvest operations. DNRC also initiated 1 in-stream turbidity monitoring project evaluating the effectiveness of RMZ buffers in preventing sediment delivery to streams. One year of pre-harvest baseline data has been collected to date.	V2. 4-43
Case studies monitoring the effectiveness of corrective actions in reducing	Annual update will consist of a summary of the status of all monitoring activities.	Case studies have not been initiated to date. Initial focus is on identifying sites in need of corrective actions (road inventory), setting priorities for corrective actions and implementing	V2. 4-43

Table 3 Aquatics reporting requirements and results

HCP COMMITMENT (Reporting Frequency)	REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS & RESULTS	HCP Page(s)
sediment from existing sources. (annual and 5 year)		corrective actions.	
Determine if fish connectivity corrective actions are effective. (annual and 5 year)	Annual update will consist of a summary of the status of all monitoring activities.	Corrective actions have been implemented on 12 fish passage structures. DNRC has scheduled effectiveness evaluations of these sites for summer and fall of 2013. DNRC has drafted a monitoring form for these evaluations (see Aquatic Attachment A-8 – HCP Fish Connectivity Effectiveness Monitoring Form).	V2. 4-43

TRANSITION LANDS STRATEGY

The purpose of the transition lands strategy is to describe the process for moving DNRC lands into or out of the HCP project area. The strategy ensures adequate levels of conservation for HCP species while allowing DNRC to meet its land management and fiduciary trust obligations. This subsection summarizes land transactions within two cap types (5% and 10%) from the period between January 2004 and December 2012. According to the HCP, DNRC will cap the removal of HCP project area lands in the NCDE and CYE grizzly bear recovery zones, CYE NROH, LMAs, and bull trout core habitat areas to 5 % of the baseline of the original HCP project area. Additionally, DNRC would cap the removal of all other HCP lands at 10 to 15 % of the original HCP project area. Since acres obtained through the Montana Working Forests Project have not yet been added to the HCP project area, the 10 % cap applies.

Land Dispositions

The following tables show total acres removed from each transition land cap in the HCP for the reporting period of Feb 22, 2012-Dec 31, 2012.

Acres that are exchanged with other state agencies, with the federal government, and with non-profit conservation organizations, private corporations or individuals, or any other non-governmental agency do not count towards these caps if the entity has an existing incidental take permit or agreement with the USFWS under which the disposed lands will be managed in a manner similar to the DNRC HCP.

TRANSITION LANDS 5% CAP				
YEAR	Baseline Acres	Acres Removed	Acres Added	Percent
2012	217,600	0	0	0

TRANSITION LANDS 10% CAP				
YEAR	Baseline Acres	Acres Removed	Acres Added	Percent
2012	330,900	760	0	0.002

Section 16 T11N R19W (640 acres) and 120 acres in Section 22 T11N R19W were sold during the February 22, 2012-December 31, 2012 reporting period. Neither section contained habitat that would qualify for the 5% cap identified in the transition lands strategy.

Prior to the issuance of the Permit, lands that were originally identified during analysis were removed through various land exchanges and land banking activities. The lands removed during this time period applied towards the 10% cap. The following tables provide a breakdown based on percent cap. A detailed list of parcels is available upon request.

TRANSITION LANDS 5% CAP				
Period	Baseline Acres	Acres Removed	Acres Added	Percent
1/1/04-2/21/12	217,600	0	0	0

TRANSITION LANDS 10% CAP				
Period	Baseline Acres	Acres Removed	Acres Added	Percent
1/1/04-2/21/12	330,900	160	0	.0004

When the 10% cap table from the current reporting period of February 22, 2012-December 31, 2012 is combined with the period of January 1, 2004-February 21, 2012 table, the total acres against the 10% cap is .0024%.

Corrections

During the reporting period, corrections were made to errors reported in the baseline grizzly bear habitat acres identified in the HCP. Cabinet Yaak Ecosystem Non Recovery Occupied Habitat (CYE NROH) acres were not included when the baseline acres were calculated. The correction to the HCP would be as follows: 217,600 would be replaced with 227, 271 in the 5% cap. In turn the 10% cap would be reduced from 330,900 acres to 321,229. This would keep the amount of acres in the HCP project area consistent at 548,500 acres.

TRAINING

The strength of the HCP lies in its implementation on the ground. Training DNRC staff responsible for implementing the HCP timber sale planning, design and administration is critical to ensure correct and consistent application of HCP commitments.

Implementation Training Prior to Issuance of the Permit

The following training took place prior to issuance of the Permit. The intent of the training was to familiarize staff with HCP commitments.

HCP Workgroup

The HCP Workgroup was formed during the HCP planning period. Members of the Workgroup represented a wide range of experience including but not limited to: forestry, fisheries, hydrology, soils and wildlife. At least one member from each land office and the forest management bureau were represented on the workgroup.

These members not only provided input during the development stages but have also assisted in training field staff prior and after issuance of the Permit.

Land Office Implementation Meetings

A series of meetings were held at the Northwest and Southwest Land Offices prior to issuance of the Permit. These meetings not only familiarized staff with the HCP commitments and the processes that would be implemented for monitoring, they also:

- Provided an opportunity to recognize potential increases in work load;
- Identify tools that would need to be developed;
- Identify possible problems and solutions that may arise during monitoring and tracking;
- Identify how the HCP would impact the planning and execution of timber sales.

Projects in Progress

DNRC decided to begin implementing HCP commitments on projects that were in the planning stages before issuance of the Permit. The HCP Workgroup defined **Projects in Progress** as any project for which the MEPA decision document is signed *following* Permit issuance. These were the projects in a stage of development where HCP compliance could *reasonably* be incorporated. It was determined that projects for which the MEPA decision document was signed *prior* to Permit issuance would either be completed or in such a stage that it would impose too great a workload for specialists and project leaders to change project design and analyses to be compliant with the HCP. However, in the HCP, both agencies committed to reviewing those projects to assess whether they are in compliance or can reasonably be brought into compliance through minor changes in project design. Although a Permit had not been issued, these projects not only complied with the ARMs, they also complied with the commitments outlined in the HCP to the extent practicable.

A Projects in Progress checklist was developed to track which commitments were applied to each Project in Progress and the accompanying rationale as to how that was done. This checklist also familiarized field practitioners with the checklist format that would later be used after the Permit was issued.

Implementation Training for this Reporting Period

The following training took place during the reporting period, and will continue as the HCP progresses forward.

Implementation Manual

Unit-specific Implementation manuals were issued to DNRC field practitioners. The manuals are specific to each field unit and provide only those commitments that are applicable for that area. In addition to field unit specific manuals, each Land Office and the Forest Management Bureau also have complete implementation manuals that provide information on all commitments in the HCP planning area.

HCP Internal Website

DNRC employees have access to an internal HCP website. This website contains all the information a project leader will need in order to properly implement the HCP. This includes information about HCP implementation as well as all the forms required to properly implement the HCP.

HCP Implementation Training

The Southwestern Land Office (SWLO) received HCP Implementation training. The training focused on properly filling out the HCP checklist, SWLO specific commitment implementation and navigating through the internal HCP website. A similar training is being planned for the Northwestern Land Office in the spring of 2013. The Central Land Office utilizes the Forest Management Bureau specialists during project development. This allows continual HCP training at the project level, thus a formal HCP Implementation Training has not yet been scheduled for the Central Land Office.

Aquatics Training

FMB and Clearwater Unit staff organized a one day field training for Southwestern Land Office practitioners. This training focused on Channel Migration Zone (CMZ) and RMZ layout. The practitioners identified and flagged the CMZ and RMZ with the guidance of the Forest Management Bureau staff.

A similar training was also held at the Stillwater Unit (Northwestern Land Office) for Stillwater practitioners as well as Northwestern Land Office hydrologists.

In addition to formal training, project-level training occurs on a regular basis. The Forest Management Bureau specialists make themselves readily available to answer all Aquatic commitment questions as well as make site visits. This method of training is very effective and will continue into the future.

Project-level Training

As mentioned earlier, project-level training occurs on a regular basis. Forest Management Bureau and Land Office Specialists participate on all Interdisciplinary Teams (ID) for projects in the HCP planning area. These Specialists are very familiar with the HCP and the conservation commitments. Many of them have served on the HCP Workgroup. This has made project-level training one of the most effective training tools for DNRC field staff. Questions arise on a project that might never surface in a classroom training session. Project-level training is ongoing and will continue to be a primary training method.

CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES

The processes for responding to Changed Circumstances are described in Chapter 6 of the HCP. The USFWS and DNRC are required to ensure changed circumstances are identified and planned for in the HCP. Changed Circumstances may be a result of administrative changes, natural events or a natural disturbance. (DNRC 2010)

There were no Changed Circumstances during this reporting period.

ADJUSTING FOR NEW RESEARCH

DNRC and USFWS are required to exchange any new relevant research or emerging science annually and at the 5-year review. Both parties cooperatively determine if the new information will warrant changes to commitments or management actions.

There was no new relevant research presented by either agency during this reporting period.

SUMMARY

The DNRC has successfully met the requirements for first year implementation and monitoring.

REFERENCES

DNRC. 2010. Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Forested State Trust Lands Habitat Conservation Plan: Final EIS, Volume II, Forest Management Bureau, Missoula, Montana.